

Agency: 477 Department of Fish and Wildlife
Decision Package Code/Title: XR Delay HPA Program Permitting
Budget Period: 2011-13
Budget Level: PL - Performance Level

Recommendation Summary Text:

Hydraulic Project Approvals

- Initial 5% reduction option is \$207,956 and 1.0 FTE
- Secondary 5% reduction option is \$421,854 and 2.0 FTEs

Thousands of construction and maintenance projects on or near water occur each year that can damage or destroy fish, shellfish and their habitats. Hydraulic Project Approval (HPA) biologists review plans for these projects and set conditions to avoid or minimize impacts to fish life. At the 5% GF-S reduction option, WDFW will eliminate 1.0 FTE, and the 10% GF-S reduction option will eliminate an additional 2.0 FTEs. These options will result in a significant delay for hundreds of HPA applicants and there will be less onsite review to tailor permit conditions to the specific needs of the site. Onsite reviews provide the best opportunity to identify project designs that protect fish life and allow for project refinement that translate into cost control measures for the applicant. Applicants will likely experience increased costs for their projects and the Department will reduce fish protection.

Fiscal Detail

Operating Expenditures	<u>FY 2012</u>	<u>FY 2013</u>	<u>Total</u>
001-1 General Fund - Basic Account-State	(314,905)	(314,905)	(629,810)
Total Cost	(314,905)	(314,905)	(629,810)
Staffing	<u>FY 2012</u>	<u>FY 2013</u>	<u>Annual Average</u>
FTEs	-3.0	-3.0	-3.0

Package Description:

Under state law, HPA biologists review plans for culverts, bulkheads, bridges and other hydraulic projects on or near natural water bodies and set conditions on the work to protect fish life. HPA staff review and issue permits for over 4,000 projects a year, ensuring that fish and shellfish are protected and their habitats are maintained. The 3.0 FTEs in this decision package represent approximately 7% of this statewide effort.

This reduction option will eliminate 7% of staff (3.0 FTEs) who review and determine conditions to protect fish and their habitats for construction of projects in or near state waters. As a result, fewer on-site visits will occur where cost-effective measures are identified to meet applicants' needs and to protect fish. Response time to applications will increase significantly, delaying project start time. Permit conditions designed to protect fish life will be more standardized for certain types of projects, with less opportunity to custom fit for site-specific variation. This will result in reduced fish protection because standardized conditions may not be applicable to unique projects and sites (e.g. a culvert installation doesn't pass fish as intended). Applicants are likely to see increased project costs because

on-site consultation resulting in cost-effective project design will be reduced.

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Name and Phone Number of Subject Matter Expert:
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Narrative Justification and Impact Statement

What specific performance outcomes does the agency expect?

NA.

Performance Measure Detail

Activity: A036 Hydraulic Project Approvals

Incremental Changes

No measures submitted for package

Is this decision package essential to implement a strategy identified in the agency's strategic plan?

This option reduces the Department's ability to implement several strategies identified in the 2011-17 WDFW Strategic Plan, specifically Goal 1: Conserve and Protect Native Fish and Wildlife. Key objectives of this initiative are protecting and restoring Washington's wild fish populations, including the habitat and ecosystem functions necessary for salmon survival and recovery.

Does this decision package provide essential support to one of the Governor's priorities?

This reduction option lessens the Department's ability to contribute directly to the Governor's priority to protect and restore Puget Sound, as reflected in the Puget Sound Partnership's Action Agenda. Improving the effectiveness and compliance of the HPA program is a priority near-term action in the Action Agenda. Salmon recovery is a key performance measure in the Puget Sound Partnership's plan.

Does this decision package make key contributions to statewide results? Would it rate as a high priority in the Priorities of Government process?

This activity ranked 18 out of 148 activities in the 2010 POG Result Area "Protect Natural Resources and Cultural and Recreational Opportunities." This also reduces the Department's ability to support the top two Priorities of Government Natural Resource strategies, including "Preserve, Maintain and Restore Natural Systems and Landscapes," and "Establish Safeguards and Standards to Protect Natural Resources."

What are the other important connections or impacts related to this proposal?

Eliminating part of the agency's core commitment to fish protection throughout the state will negatively impact related agency initiatives and responsibilities, including harvest and hatchery production. Hampered fish protection has negative economic impacts by reducing harvest opportunities. Healthy fish populations mean a healthy natural environment that attracts recreation and the revenue associated with those activities.

What alternatives were explored by the agency, and why was this alternative chosen?

Across the board cuts were considered and rejected because this would result in inefficiencies and disruption in several functional areas.

What are the consequences of not funding this package?

Permit applicants will suffer delays in processing. Fish protection will be reduced due to fewer onsite reviews to appropriately tailor permit conditions and there will be less follow-up for compliance to ensure permit conditions are correctly adhered to. Some projects will be more expensive for applicants because cost-saving measures will not be identified by staff.

What is the relationship, if any, to the state's capital budget?

This option may delay completion of WDFW funded capital projects where an HPA permit is required and may cause the Department to request higher reappropriation amounts for these projects.

What changes would be required to existing statutes, rules, or contracts, in order to implement the change?

None.

Expenditure and revenue calculations and assumptions

The following costs assumptions have been used:

Salaries (A) Object A is based on Fish and Wildlife Biologist 3 salary of \$56,000 per FY. Reduction of staff is assumed to take place in FY 12.

Benefits (B) Calculated by job class, the average benefits rate for the agency is equal to 37.9% of salaries.

Contracts (C) None involved.

Goods & Services (E) Object E, includes infrastructure and support costs and DOP and HRMS fees. \$99,810 of this package, included in object E, represents the administrative support associated with this program reduction. Recent administrative cuts have been deeper than program cuts, and administrative services reflect skeletal staffing levels. Future administrative cuts will therefore be proportionate to program reductions, and administrative functions will generally comply with state and federal laws.

Travel (G) Travel is estimated at \$500/FY per FTE.

Which costs and functions are one-time? Which are ongoing? What are the budget impacts in future biennia?

All costs are ongoing.

<u>Object Detail</u>	<u>FY 2012</u>	<u>FY 2013</u>	<u>Total</u>
A Salaries And Wages	(168,000)	(168,000)	(336,000)
B Employee Benefits	(63,600)	(63,600)	(127,200)
E Goods And Services	(81,805)	(81,805)	(163,610)
G Travel	(1,500)	(1,500)	(3,000)
Total Objects	(314,905)	(314,905)	(629,810)